

THE



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ONE YEAR OLD

Writing most of the time about 2000 year old coins, one year would seem at first to be almost insignificant. But when that year has been filled with hard work that has yielded good results its significance becomes apparent. This is the twelfth issue of The Augur, marking the completion of our first year. The Biblical Numismatic Society now has 430 members in all parts of the world including Poland, Switzerland, Australia, Israel, Mexico, Canada, South Africa and all parts of the United States. I'm glad that our enthusiasm is proving contagious!

We are still a 1½-man organization, so excuse us when the newsletter is a little late or we are behind in correspondence . . . we're trying and everything does get done eventually!

If you have received every issue of The Augur and haven't yet renewed this will be your last issue! **Please send in the low \$8 Charter Membership renewal dues if your subscription is running out.**

Mel Wacks NLG
Editor



These are the only four coin-designs to feature "Zion" (צִיּוֹן or צִיּוֹן) in the legend, all issued during the First Revolt.

Coin of the Month

THE DELIVERANCE OF ZION

The term "Zionism" is a modern one, coined in 1891 by Nathan Birnbaum. However, "Zion" had a special meaning as far back as after the destruction of the First Jewish Temple (587 BC), in expressing the yearning of the Jewish people for a homeland.

Zion originally referred to a Jebusite hill fortress in southern Jerusalem: "David took the stronghold of Zion; the same is the city of David." Eventually Zion was used to designate the whole of Jerusalem ("Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria," Amos 6:1), and even the entire Israelite kingdom ("Zion shall be redeemed with judgement, and her converts with righteousness," Isaiah 1:27).

In the entire history of ancient Judaeon numismatics there are only a few coins, all struck during the First Revolt (66-70 AD), that carry the inscription "Zion." The first coin to have this distinction was the bronze prutah struck in the third and fourth years of the war, which reads "Deliverance (Hebrew=Cherut) of Zion." In the fourth year, "For the Redemption (Hebrew=Legelut) of Zion" was used on three larger bronze denominations.

The Zion inscription surrounds a vine leaf on the prutah. The vine, as well as grapes and wine, figure frequently in the Bible as both an important part of the Jewish economy and ritual. The cultivation of vineyards was one of the earliest forms of husbandry recorded in the Scriptures: "And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard" (Genesis 9:20). The vine and grapes decorated the sacred utensils in the Sanctuary, and a golden vine with clusters of grapes stood at its entrance. The vine was a symbol of Israel ("Israel is an empty vine," Hosea 10:1), and in the Talmud it is used to represent the world or Jerusalem. And the vine is a symbol of fertility ("Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine," Psalm 128:3). The vine leaf was to become the most common numismatic symbol employed on the bronze coins of Bar Kochba, reinforcing its ritual significance.

Again we thank Dr. Robert Webber for the excellent slide of the First Revolt prutah.

PUBLIUS AELIUS HADRIANUS

by Steve Rubinger (Numismatic Fine Arts) and Mel Wacks

In selecting his successor, Trajan passed over several of his chief military associates in favor of a distant relative named P. Aelius Hadrianus. The formal act of adoption was delayed to the very last, and so gave rise to the rumor that Hadrian owed his elevation to a ruse created by Plotina. Plotina was alleged to have kept Trajan's death a secret until an official bulletin of a death-bed adoption had been safely launched. However, various earlier marks of favor which Trajan bestowed upon the next emperor are sufficient proof that he had made his choice with true discernment.



Emperor Trajan (98-117 AD) and the Empress Plotina.

Born in 76 A.D., Hadrian lost his father at the age of ten and was placed under the guardianship of Trajan. Being a great favorite with Trajan, because of his handsome person and his captivating manners, he afterwards drew closer the bonds of friendship by marrying the emperor's niece, Sabina, daughter of Marciana. In 101 A.D. he



Emperor Hadrian (117-138 AD) and the Empress Sabina.

became questor, and at the expiration of that office, followed Trajan to the Dacian war. His military career was strengthened with successful campaigns in Dacia and Pannonia Inferior which led to his consulate in 109. Growing more and more in favor with Trajan, he was appointed "legatus" to conduct the war then pending with Parthia. Because of ill health, Trajan prepared to return from the East in 117 and left Hadrian with the command of the army in Syria. Shortly afterwards, Trajan died at the city of Selinus in Cilicia, and Hadrian, in the virtue of letters of adoption, signed by Plotina and forwarded to Rome, took at Antioch the title of emperor without waiting for the Senatorial confirmation.

The interest of Hadrian in the provinces was manifested by his systematic tours of inspection. He visited all but a few remote corners of his dominion. He made a grand tour of the empire in 121 - 6, travelling along the Rhine and Danube fronts, making an excursion into Britain, passing through Spain into Mauretania and Africa, and concluding his rounds with a long sojourn in Asia Minor and Greece. In 129-34, he made a similar progress through the eastern provinces as far as Egypt. Of the



Bronze As of Hadrian with Nilus (the Nile) reclining on reverse.

twenty-one years of his reign, Hadrian spent more than half outside of Italy. Though his travels served to gratify his curiosity as a sightseer and to provide an outlet for his restless activity, the main purpose undoubtedly was to give him a first-hand acquaintance with provincial government in all the three continents. He was able to exercise a more effective control over his subordinates than any previous emperor.

The large series of coins relating to the journeys of Hadrian display a remarkable uniformity of design and legend. All of these coins were struck toward the end of his reign, when Hadrian had finally returned to Rome to rest from his endeavors. Mattingly states, "they represent, not a preliminary announcement of his imperial program, not a running commentary on the gradual execution of his plans, but rather the crowning of his life - task, the comment on the text of an accomplished work." One series, inscribed with the legend FELICITATI AVG, is



accompanied by the type of the galley rowing or sailing, suggests that the emperor is travelling happily from shore to shore of the empire (as the emperor travelled frequently by ship), carrying happiness with him wherever he goes. Another series shows the provinces of the Roman Empire represented as female figures in appropriate attire and with distinguishing attributes. A third represents the ADVENTVS (arrival) of the emperor in the various provinces by a scene of sacrifice in which Hadrian and the personified province stood face to face. Finally the RESTITVTOR series shows Hadrian as "restorer" extending his hand to raise to her feet the province kneeling before him.



Adventus type.

Restitutor type.

Another most remarkable and rare series is that of the LIBERALITAS type which represents the emperor distributing largesses to the citizens from a platform. This wonderful series of gifts to the public clearly represent a definite intention of Hadrian. By his wise administration and peaceful policy, he undoubtedly saved considerable sums of money. In using a large part of these savings, Hadrian strived for something more than the desire to win cheap popularity. He wanted to raise the standard of living and encourage citizens to rear families. Trajan distributed no fewer than 650 denarii, Hadrian 1000, and Antoninus Pius 800 per person. Boasting to be "Restorer of the World" Hadrian's extensive coinage displays a vivid and comprehensive picture of his work and brings before us with remarkable force, the interest and care that he devoted to the individuals of his Empire.

The Judaeae cities — Gaza, Casarea and Tiberias benefited from Hadrian's construction program. And the greatest challenge was the rebuilding of Jerusalem, which had been razed sixty years before at the climax of the First Revolt. Orders were given to rebuild the city completely . . . even the 2,000 year old name was changed to Colonia Aelia Capitolinus. In keeping with the Hellenization of the Jewish Holy City, Hadrian planned to construct a Roman Temple on the site of the razed Jewish Temple. This destroyed the hope of the Jews that their Temple would be restored, and was one of the primary causes of the new uprising led by Simon Bar Kochba in 132 C.E.



Bronze coin commemorates the founding of Aelia Capitolinus

Coins were issued commemorating Hadrian's visits to Egypt, Macedonia, Spain, etc. and Judaea was no exception.

Bronze coins were struck in several varieties and denominations which show Hadrian attending a sacrificial ceremony in Judaea.



A Sestertius shows Hadrian standing facing right before a female (Judaea allegory) who holds a patera and a box, between them is an altar. On either side of the woman there is a child holding a palm branch. A bull is shown standing in front of the altar.

The sacrifice was the main part of the religious ceremonies of the ancients. For blood-offerings, cattle, goats, sheep and pigs were used. If the creature voluntarily followed to the altar or even bowed its head, it was considered to be a favorable sign. Both of these favorable attitudes can be found on the Adventui Judaea coins.



Roman temple on coin of Aelia Capitolinus, issued by Hadrian.

While sheep and cattle could be offered to many of the gods, at Rome there were special regulations with respect to the victims appropriate to the different divinities. The specified offering for Jupiter was a young steer of a white color, or at least with a white spot on its forehead. This scene was historically significant since the city of Jerusalem had been renamed, in part for the god Jupiter Capitolinus and Hadrian had made his intention clear to erect a temple to Jupiter on the site of the Jewish Temple.

The altar, which is shown foreshortened in the background, is actually quite tall — about twice as high as the bull standing directly in front of it. The height of altars was proportional to the importance of the god being honored, and Jupiter was the chief of the gods in Roman mythology.

Hadrian is wearing a toga, a symbol of peace which was worn principally for certain ceremonial rites such as the founding of towns, during incantations, at the opening of a temple, and at various sacrificial observances.

With a scroll in his left hand and his right hand raised, the Emperor appears to be making a proclamation . . . could it be the Hellenizing of Jerusalem that preceded the revolt? or that followed the defeat of the Jews?

Unlike the female representation, who represents the Jewish country, shown weeping on the Judaea Capta coins following the First Revolt (c. 70 C. E.), the woman on Hadrian's Adventui Judaea coins was evidently meant to illustrate the successful Hellenization of Judaea.

Similarly, the children probably represent the restoration of the population via new (non-Jewish) colonists.

The woman is holding a patera in her outstretched right hand to the Emperor. The patera was a broad, flat dish or saucer used by the ancients for offering libations. The patera was made of earthenware or metal (gold, silver or bronze). The allegorical female figure holds a box in her left hand. A similar representation can be seen in a Roman relief portraying a sacrificial attendant. These symbols — the patera and sacrificial box — would hardly be used by a member of the Jewish faith.

The palm branches held by the children were used in religious processions; they symbolize dignity, royal honor, jubilation and/or victory.

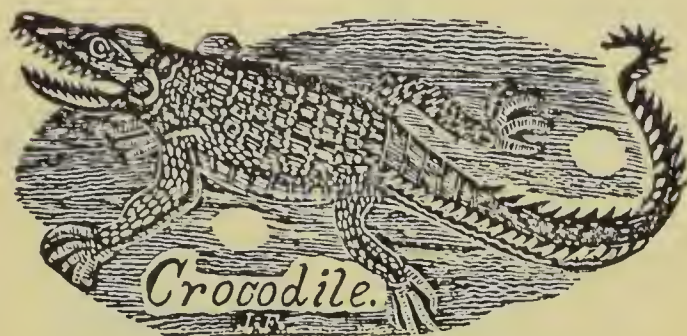


Children presenting palm branch to goddess on Roman sestertius.

Scripture Animals

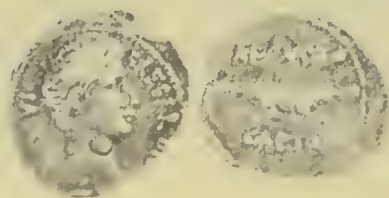
DRAGON (CROCODILE)

by Rev. Jonathan Fisher (1833)



The Hebrew word rendered Dragon, is Tannem, or Tannen. The word frequently occurs in the Old Testament. In Gen. 1:23, Job 7:12, and Ezekiel 32:2, it is rendered *Whales*. In most of the places where the word is found the Crocodile is probably intended; and this may be the case even in those, where it is rendered *Whale*. In Ezekiel 32:2, for instance, Pharaoh is compared to a Tannen, which troubles the water with his feet; as the whale has no feet, we may believe the Crocodile is meant, which has feet, and is found sometimes on land, and sometimes in water. The Septuagint renders the word eight times by *Drakon*, *Dragon*; three times by *Seiren*, *Siren*; twice by *Strouthos*, *Ostrich*, and by several other words, and four or five times omits to translate it. As is well known that the Crocodile inhabits the Nile, and its banks, and as Pharaoh, king of Egypt, is called Tannen, it is likely that this word especially means Crocodile, but may perhaps be used in some passages, for some other animal in some respects resembling this.

When we read in Deut. 32:33, of the poison of dragons, it seems natural to suppose that some kind of venomous serpents is intended; and by some the dragon has been called fierce, winged serpent. But the Hebrew word here rendered poison, usually means anger, fury; so the passage might be rendered, *the fury of Crocodiles*. Believing that this animal is generally intended by the word *Dragon*, in the Old Testament, I shall give some description of the Crocodile. He is sometimes more than twenty feet in length, and five feet in circumference. His legs are in shape like those of the common lizard, the fore legs much resembling the arms of a man; his head is long, his nose sharp, and his eyes small, compared with his size. His tongue is short, and most of the way fixed to the under part of his mouth. His body is covered with a hard shell, marked both ways with seams. The upper part of his tail is furnished with a kind of rough scales, projecting like saw-teeth; but as he can bend it at pleasure, as the tail of a serpent, what is said of Leviathan, as a crooked serpent,



Denarius commemorates Roman subjugation of Egypt (AEGYPTO CAPTA) by Augustus after the battle of Actium, 31 BC.



Emperor Augustus (27 BC-14 AD) and Agrippa (died 12 BC) share this bronze of Nemausus with a crocodile.

in Isaiah 27:1, may apply to this animal. His back is of a dark brown, his belly of a whitish, citron color; his sides are ornamented with large spots of both these colors. The female lays her eggs in the sand to be hatched by the sun.

The Crocodile abounds in the Nile, the Niger, and the Ganges, and in other great rivers of Asia and Africa. The Alligator may be considered as the Crocodile of America, and the Cayman the Crocodile of the Antilles.

In upper Egypt the Crocodile is very destructive; it lies in wait near the brink of the Nile, seizes its victim with a spring, and drags it into the water. It will master even the tiger. The natives of some countries kill it for the sake of its flesh, which to them is pleasant food; and some also eat its eggs. The Ichneumon and Ibis eagerly devour both its eggs and young; and even the parent Crocodiles destroy many of their own young. In this way kind providence prevents the multiplication of an animal, which otherwise might desolate whole regions of the country.

In Job 30:29, Job calls himself a brother of Dragons; this he did perhaps on account of his solitary state; being forsaken of most of his friends; or on account of his cries of distress; for the crocodile is fond of solitary places, and is said to utter a howling cry over its prey, and when fighting an enemy.

In Psal. 91:13, it is said, the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. From this we may gather that the dragon was a very formidable animal, and abiding sometimes at least upon land; and so probably the crocodile is intended. It further teaches that those who put their trust in God will finally triumph over their most powerful enemies.

In Micah 1:8, the prophet says, I will make a wailing like the dragons; from this it appears that the animals here alluded to uttered a wailing, or howling noise.

By the great red dragon, brought to view repeatedly in the book of Revelations, we are to understand Pagan Rome, swayed and managed by the prince of the devils in its persecutions of the christians; or rather the prince of the devils himself.



Bronze struck in North Africa by Marcus Canidius Crassus, Lieutenant of Mark Antony, features a rather crude but ferocious looking crocodile.